

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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TAGS: PFOR, SOCI, PA

SUBJECT: INDIAN AFFAIRS - NATIONAL INDIGENIST CONFERENCE PLANNED
FOR 1975

REF: ASUNCION A-35 MAY 13, 1974

1. ON JUNE 20, AT THE THIRD OF A SERIES OF ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS ON INDIAN AFFAIRS BEING SPONSORED BY DEFENSE MINISTER SAMANIEGO, PARTICIPATING MISSIONARIES, ANTHROPOLOGISTS, AND GOP OFFICIALS ADOPTED A RESOLUTION TO CONVOKE A SECOND NATIONAL INDIGENIST CONGRESS IN FEBRUARY 1975. ACTION ON A SECOND AGENDA ITEM, THE PROPOSED CREATION OF A HIGH-LEVEL COUNCIL TO COORDINATE GOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE EFFORTS TO ASSIST PARAGUAY'S INDIANS, WAS POSTPONED UNTIL THE NEXT DISCUSSION, SCHEDULED FOR JULY 18.

2. MINISTER SAMANIEGO, IN PROPOSING THAT A SECOND NATIONAL INDIGENIST CONGRESS BE CONVOKED (THE FIRST SUCH CONGRESS WAS HELD IN 1959), SAID ITS PURPOSE WOULD BE TO PUBLICIZE THE PROBLEMS FACED BY INDIANS IN PARAGUAY AND TO GIVE ALL INTERESTED PARTIES AN OPPOR-

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TUNITY TO DISCUSS MEASURES TO SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS.

THE TASK OF PLANNING THE CONGRESS WAS DELEGATED TO

A COMMITTEE HEADED BY GENERAL (RET). RAMON CESAR
BEJARANO, PRESIDENT OF THE PARAGUAYAN INDIGENIST
ASSOCIATION.

3. COMMENT: THE ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS, WHICH SAMA-
NIEGO NOW PLANS TO HOLD MONTHLY, PROVIDE A USEFUL FORUM
FOR THOSE WORKING WITH INDIANS TO AIR THEIR PROBLEMS.
JESUIT PRIEST BARTOLOME MELIA, WHO LAST MONTH WAS THE
ONLY PARTICIPANT WHO DECLINED TO SIGN A DECLARATION
DENYING THE EXISTENCE OF "GENOCIDE" IN PARAGUAY (SEE
REFAIR,) DID NOT ATTEND THIS MONTH'S DISCUSSIONS, BUT
MOST MAJOR IN-COUNTRY MISSIONARY GROUPS WERE REPRESENTED
ONCE AGAIN. MOREOVER, THE DISCUSSIONS SEEM TO BE
GROWING MORE OPEN AND VIGOROUS WITH EACH MEETING.
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